

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-32 (Canceled)

Claim 33 (Currently Amended) An electrically actuatable igniter comprising:
a pair of electrodes;
a heating element electrically connected between said electrodes; and
an ignition material in contact with said heating element, said ignition material comprising a uniformly dispersed mixture of a metal powder and a particulate oxidizer that exothermically reacts with said metal powder, said oxidizer having an average particle size of about 1 μm to about 30 μm , said metal powder being selected from the group consisting of electro-exploded aluminum powder, electro-exploded titanium powder, electro-exploded copper powder, electro-exploded zinc powder, and electro-exploded yttrium powder, wherein said ignition material does not thermally decompose at temperatures up to about 120°C and deflagrates when the heating element is heated to a temperature of at least about 250°C, and wherein said ignition material is free of a binder.

Claim 34 (Canceled)

Claim 35 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein the oxidizer is selected from the group consisting of alkali metal nitrates, alkaline earth metal nitrates, alkali metal perchlorates, alkaline earth metal perchlorates, alkali metal chlorates, alkaline earth metal chlorates, ammonium perchlorates, ammonium nitrate, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 36 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein the electro-exploded metal powder is electro-exploded aluminum.

Claim 37 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein the electro-exploded metal powder is about 15% to about 75% by weight of the ignition material.

Claim 38 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein the amount of oxidizer is about 25% to about 85% by weight of the ignition material.

Claim 39 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein the ignition material upon ignition produces an ignition product with a temperature of about 3000°C to about 6000°C.

Claim 40 is cancelled.

Claim 41 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 33 wherein said metal powder has a surface area of about 15 square meters per gram.

Claim 42 (Previously presented) An electrically actuatable igniter comprising:
a pair of electrodes;
a heating element electrically connected between said electrodes; and
an ignition material in contact with said heating element, said ignition material consisting essentially of a uniformly dispersed mixture of a metal powder and a particulate oxidizer, the metal powder being present in the ignition material in an amount of about 25% to about 50%, by weight of the ignition material, said particulate oxidizer reacting exothermically with said metal powder, said particulate oxidizer having an average particle size of about 1 μm to about 30 μm , wherein said metal powder consists of electro-exploded aluminum powder and said ignition material deflagrates when the heating element is heated to a temperature of at least about 250°C.

Claim 43 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 42 wherein said oxidizer is selected from the group consisting of alkali metal nitrates, alkaline earth metal nitrates, alkali metal perchlorates, alkaline earth metal perchlorates, alkali metal chlorates, alkaline earth metal chlorates, ammonium perchlorate, ammonium nitrate, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 44 (Previously presented) The electrically actuatable igniter of claim 42 wherein said ignition material upon deflagration produces an ignition product with a temperature of about 3000°C to about 6000°C.

Claim 45 (Withdrawn) An apparatus comprising:
a vehicle occupant protection device;
a gas generating material, which produces a combustion gas upon ignition to actuate the vehicle occupant protection device; and
an electrically actuatable igniter for igniting the gas generating material, the electrically actuatable igniter comprising a pair of electrodes, a heating element electrically connected between the electrodes; and an ignition material in contact with the heating element, the ignition material comprising a uniformly dispersed mixture of a metal powder

and a particulate oxidizer that exothermically reacts with said metal powder, said oxidizer having an average particle size of about 1 μm to about 30 μm , said metal powder being selected from the group consisting of electro-exploded aluminum powder, electro-exploded titanium powder, electro-exploded copper powder, electro-exploded zinc powder, and electro-exploded yttrium powder, wherein said ignition material deflagrates when the heating element is heated to a temperature of at least about 250°C, and wherein said ignition material is free of a binder.